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THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL JOURNAL

Continuing "*The Elementary School Teacher*"

VOLUME XIX

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NUMBER I

Educational News and Editorial Comment

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR VOLUME XIX

With the present issue this Journal enters on its nineteenth year. The past year was one of substantial increase in the subscription list and in volume of material printed.

During the coming year the Journal will carry out in a practical way a theory which its editors have for some years past been discussing. There will be detailed studies of certain important agencies of the school system. This year it is to be the school principal and the text-book. At least five articles dealing with each of these will be printed and it is hoped that enough interest will be stirred up in these topics so that an article may appear in each issue.

The *Elementary School Journal* is published monthly from September to June by the University of Chicago. It is edited and managed by the Department of Education as one of a series of educational publications. The series including also *The School Review* and the *Supplementary Educational Monographs* is under a joint editorial committee and covers the whole field of educational interests.

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There is little need of a statement of the reasons which have led to the selection of these two subjects. The principal ought to have his sphere defined. Often he or she needs to be stimulated to do something besides mere routine. It is possible to find school systems where the most urgently needed reform is a complete renovation of the staff of principals. It is possible, on the other hand, to find schools which owe to the intelligent supervision of the principal a vigor of action and an effectiveness of achievement which is encouraging in the largest degree. The purpose of the projected articles on the principal is to make of this officer a more important and efficient factor in the life of the school.

As for text-books, our schools live by their use. They should be studied.

Other special features of forthcoming numbers are announced elsewhere. The editors ask for co-operation. News notes are solicited. The only way we can keep readers informed is by securing a supply of timely notes. Articles are solicited. We cannot write all the articles ourselves and make the Journal representative of American education. We solicit support. This Journal is printed for distribution. It does not make one cent of profit and never will. Whatever it receives goes back into printing and securing material. Look at the workmanship and consider the content. If these seem to you of the right kind, give the editors suggestions for improvement and any support you can by way of additions to the subscription list. The business manager is anxious to get into contact with anyone who is willing to do promotion work on this Journal; the editors are anxious to get into contact with everybody.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The Pittsburgh meeting of the Association considered at some length the report of a committee which has drafted a

new constitution designed to bring into being a representative teachers' organization to take the place of the local mass meeting which has up to this time assumed the name National Association. Under the present constitution the annual meetings are confessedly not representative. They are dominated in all the voting by the local teachers. It has been freely charged that the meeting has in recent years been "taken" to New York or Boston or Chicago for this or that purpose. Indeed, for some years past the Department of Superintendence, in order to keep clear of N. E. A. politics, has refused to meet in Chicago, because this center has been supposed to threaten some kind of undesirable local interference with the doings of the Department.

The projected reorganization is to follow the general outlines of the American Medical Association, which is one of the most successful and influential professional organization in the country. Members are to come automatically into the National Association by virtue of their connection with state associations. The voting is to be done by a house of delegates and the whole profession is to have a voice in the actions of the Association.

There are disagreements about details of the program, but in the main it is evident that some such reorganization is demanded by the teachers.

The question arises, Why did the matter not come to a final stage at Pittsburgh? Why were the disagreements not ironed out and a new, strong type of representative organization created? There are various answers to this question. One is that the membership needs more time to consider the case. Another is that there were so few people at the Pittsburgh meeting that it did not seem wise to take radical action.

There are other less savory answers offered. It is said that the dominant political party did not dare face the vote;

that the plan would have been reorganized on the floor to such an extent that the leaders preferred to wait until next year when the meeting could be "taken" somewhere.

Whatever the particular answer to the question why action was delayed, it is perfectly evident that the educators of this country are not yet in full agreement as to their plans of organization. This is a great pity, for never did the educational profession need more than at this time to stand as a unit. If there is anywhere in the councils of the N. E. A. that kind of political manipulation which tends to destroy unity and confidence, a way ought to be found of eliminating it. There is no point in mincing words; the teachers of this country want the politics which have dominated and nearly wrecked the N. E. A. removed, carried out, and put far from us. The president of the Association will be backed to the limit in purging the Association of that which has hampered its development in recent years.

The Association has a large opportunity to serve the country and the age. The time is ripe for progressive organizing of American schools on broad lines. In this connection the exhortation of Mr. Frank Roscoe, Secretary of the Teachers' Registration Council of England, who was the British representative to the Pittsburgh meeting, is full of wisdom and encouragement. In the *Nation* of July 20 he writes:

The teachers of America are evidently turning their minds in the direction of an organization more closely knit together than is the National Education Association. The problem is a domestic one, and therefore not to be discussed by an outsider. It is to be hoped, however, that the annual Convention will never become a mere political gathering, absorbed in the discussion of questions of salary, conditions of service, and such topics. It is the duty of teachers to discuss the principles underlying their work and to show that they have a professional spirit. Such discussions were a marked feature of the Pittsburgh meeting and proved to be extremely stimulating and valuable to the visitor from abroad.

THE ENGLISH EDUCATION BILL

Late in July the English House of Commons passed the Fisher Bill, which was introduced a year ago last spring. This bill is one of the most progressive educational measures that has ever been adopted by any government. It is based on a broad principle which we in America must study and in the long run adopt in some form. The fundamental principle of the Fisher Bill is that the state is directly responsible for the education of children through the whole period of infancy and youth until such time as they are qualified to become productive, independent citizens.

In order to understand the full significance of this measure one must remember that the school system of England has been in very large measure, like our own, a voluntary affair governed by local boards. To be sure, England has long had a Central Board with its Minister in the Cabinet, but the Central Board exercised up to 1902 chiefly the function of a subsidizing agency distributing national funds to local educational authorities. There were inspectors who went out from London to the provinces, but the whole scheme was loose and voluntary. Up to 1902 the religious bodies were the chief educational agencies. They owned many of the schools and dictated the policies.

The act of 1902 did much to establish the principle of public control and public support. Furthermore, that act led to the enlargement of higher education and opened up the advanced schools to the common people on more generous terms than ever before. Still the limits of compulsory education were left to the locality and there was great lack of uniformity in this matter throughout England.

In the midst of a slowly developing educational policy came the social unrest which immediately preceded the war. Labor was clamoring for fuller recognition of the rights of the common people. There was a demand for a clearer definition of

the conditions under which women and children can properly enter industry. In the meantime the educational authorities were coming at the problem from their side. The London County Council had found, as had other municipal school boards, that continuation schools cannot succeed when there is no compulsion. It was more and more apparent that if the children who enter the trades are to be properly trained they must be released under law by their employers for continuation education during daylight hours.

The lessons of the war have powerfully re-enforced the lessons learned before 1914. England has taken a step in the midst of the war which is intended to meet the whole social problem of child labor and education.

The law is accordingly one which deals in parallel terms with child labor and education. The law provides explicitly that no child under twelve may be employed for wages. If a child from twelve to fourteen is employed, it must be out of school hours and the work must not extend beyond eight o'clock p.m. No street trading is permitted for children of less than fourteen. The educational authorities are further empowered to forbid employment of children if such employment endangers health.

Beyond fourteen children may be employed if the educational authorities permit, but in that case the child must be sent at least eight daylight hours per week to continuation schools. This arrangement is made binding at present up to sixteen years of age and is subsequently to move forward automatically to eighteen. The reason for not enacting the limit of eighteen now is that there are not enough teachers to provide schools.

The importance of this act as an example to America lies in the control which it gives education over child employment. We in this country have been very backward in most states in dealing with child labor. The financial powers back of the

desire to secure cheap labor have been so strong that many of our state legislatures have not dared to act. There was some hope in the national child labor law. The ruling of the Supreme Court which declared that law to be unconstitutional created a situation which challenges our most vigorous effort.

The English Bill has other virtues, but its chief virtue is that it recognizes childhood and youth as periods of dependence and education. It throws the full power of the nation into the scale against profiteering of children's lives. America will not live up to the obligations of a democracy until it has done at least as well.

SCHOOL LIFE, A PUBLICATION OF THE
BUREAU OF EDUCATION

Number I, Volume I, of a new periodical came to hand on August 1. It is a sixteen-page publication brought out by the Bureau of Education and described in an accompanying letter as intended for all state, city, and county superintendents, high-school principals, secretaries of boards of education, college departments of education, normal schools, and other similar institutions and individuals. It is a medium for distribution of news and for a statement of the policies of the Department of the Interior and its Bureau of Education.

This first issue has on the first page an account of the work of the Garden Army and an article on War Americanization. On the last pages is Secretary Lane's address before the Pittsburgh meeting of the National Education Association. Between there are numerous articles which cannot be referred to in detail, but are headed with such titles as the following: Government Policies Involving the Schools in War Time, Home Economies on a War Basis, College Training Plans in Full Swing, and so on.

This publication will fill a large place in American education. Many of our present educational publications deal

with matters that are trivial and local. There is a breadth in the view which the Bureau of Education commands which will give the educational news which it prints a national character. The profession is put under new obligations to the Bureau and the Department by this publication.

TEXT-BOOKS AND PATRIOTISM

There are indications that the ordinary citizen is beginning to recognize the text-book as an important influence in schools. There is an agitation for the study of text-books now under way, prompted by the desire to eliminate unpatriotic material. Let us hope that this agitation will carry the schools of the country far enough to make teachers more intelligent about text-book problems in general.

The following clippings from newspapers, one from Washington, the other published as an editorial in the *Chicago Tribune*, give the facts in the case:

The national committee of patriotic societies is starting a nation-wide survey of school text-books with the purpose of securing the general adoption of those containing a high note of patriotism and the elimination of such as carry German propaganda.

A statement sent out today by the officers to thousands of local chairmen of the forty-two represented societies says:

"It is high time the insidious German propaganda which for years has been circulated through our school system be crushed. Our people should have the assurance that from the head of the bureau of education to the humblest teacher in the district school the personnel of our educational forces is aggressively American. Local partriotic leaders can do no more effective work than by investigating the books in the schools of their community and seeing that only those above suspicion are used.

"They should also see that books teaching patriotism are used in every grade, beginning next September. If there are members of your school board or teaching force whose loyalty can be questioned see that they are made to resign.

"If we are ever to have real patriotism in this country it must be taught to our small children."

The proposal is made that a national survey of school text-books be undertaken for the purpose of eliminating those books which in the light of events may be out of harmony with American principles and American ideals. That a good many of our history texts might well be discarded is clearly shown by Charles Altschul's monograph on "The American Revolution in Our School Text Books." Mr. Altschul discovered that a large percentage of books on American history now used in the schools tend to give a distorted view of the circumstances that led up to our revolutionary war. The net result, in his opinion, is to produce a prejudice against Great Britain which is based on perverted or at least insufficient appreciation of the facts.

There are also the books which might be loosely characterized as "pro-German" in character. The question of discrimination in rejecting these books is obviously a difficult one and one which ought not to be decided without a certain degree of caution. We may all agree that any book which creates sympathy for the German cause should be unhesitatingly eliminated; we may perhaps conclude that the teaching of German in the lower grades is of dubious propriety; but these considerations hardly seem to warrant a wholesale educational war against the intellectual products of Germany. It is quite possible that by a better comprehension of these products we may better prepare ourselves against any new and noxious developments of Prussianism. Our engineers do not refuse to study the German guns or the composition of German gas.

But the most important object that could be accomplished by a survey of school text-books would be to make certain that our instruction is guided primarily by the idea of promoting American nationalism. It has too often been the case in the past that a few lessons in civics, so-called, were the only contribution to the development of the spirit of Americanism. A certain amount of technical information without life or meaning, was inculcated, but that was about all.

The stimulus of the war affords an opportunity to bring about a great reform in this regard.

THE CHICAGO SCHOOL SYSTEM

Chicago is in a pathetic state of distraction about her schools. The Supreme Court of the state of Illinois has declared the present Board of Education to have been illegal in its assumption of office. The City Council, after voting to ratify the appointment of certain members of this Board,

rescinded its action. The Supreme Court has sustained the contention that the rescinding was within the Council's rights. The decision of the Court was by a bare majority of four to three. Since the decision one of the majority judges has retired and a new judge has taken his place. The Board has asked for a rehearing. It will be impossible to get a decision on the motion for a rehearing until the Court convenes again in October. In the meantime the Board goes on its way.

Among the other acts of the Board was the appropriation of \$60,000 for a school census. The appropriation has been attacked by the newspapers on two grounds. First, the census comes so late that it will not affect the report to the state department and consequently will not be the basis of Chicago's draft on the state funds. Second, the appropriation will be administered, it is asserted, in the interests of the political campaign now being carried forward by the Mayor.

Nothing could be more to the point than Mr. Greeson's article in the current number of this Journal. If the Board of Education had the remotest notion of what a good census might do for the schools and if it had the slightest intention of using the census for educational purposes, it might meet its enemies.

But neither this Board nor its predecessor has risen to the level of the broad view of Superintendent Greeson. In the course of the discussion of the present proposed census it has been abundantly shown that the last census was made up in the crudest possible way. Enumerators were appointed for purely political reasons, by methods which would constitute a recognized scandal in any other city. The results were so grossly in error as to lead the officer in charge to substitute the most haphazard guesses for the figures returned.

In the midst of the census revelations comes a text-book story which has all the marks of an even worse scandal.

Truly the citizens of Chicago are asleep or on a journey. The children of this city are being robbed of their rights as future citizens by a school organization which is unspeakable. Business men shrug their shoulders. Teachers are distracted and at variance with one another and with the Board. The Board is reckless and piles up deficit on deficit. It fails to perform its legal functions and wrangles in the most undignified fashion at every meeting. Surely democracy is long-suffering.

THE ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT AND SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN

Superintendent Spaulding was called on by the War Department just before he went to France for the Y. M. C. A. to prepare a plan for the education of children of the families of munition workers. The following extracts from his report state the problem and the solution which he recommended. The plan has been adopted and the Ordnance Department of the Army is now engaged in providing schools for somewhat more than 15,000 pupils.

Among plants engaged or about to engage in the manufacture or handling of munitions for the Ordnance Department of the United States Army, several are located on Government reservations. Such reservations are several miles distant from any considerable centers of population. Hence, in connection with most of the plants so located, preparations are being made for a population resident within the reservation sufficient to supply all or a portion of the workmen required for the operation of the plant. Some plants are providing dormitories or barracks for the residence within the reservation of unmarried people only, of either sex, or of both sexes, while others are providing family homes for a portion or all of their prospective residents. The provision of family homes and the employment of married men or women resident in those homes, creates a problem of child education within the Government reservation. . . .

As pointed out above, the Government reservations in question are so located that no existing school facilities are accessible to the child residents of the reservations. Hence, such facilities must be provided; and should be

provided within the reservations, that they may be easily accessible to all concerned. . .

The usual principles and methods of educational support and control are not applicable within the Government reservations under discussion. There is no organized local authority for the provision of school buildings and the maintenance of schools; were there such authority, it could raise no money by taxation for the support of education, as all reservation property belongs to the Government and is non-taxable. The States within which these Government reservations are located are not in position to assume directly the responsibility for the organization and support of education within the reservations; all States exercise educational control chiefly through local authorities; the financial support of education is also chiefly local. In short, the very act of creating these Government reservations has removed them from the jurisdiction of local and State authorities. . .

Educational support and control within Government reservations should be exercised directly by the Ordnance Department, not indirectly through the contractors operating the munitions plants within the reservations. The educational problem is a special problem, requiring the service of experts; it is quite foreign to the production problems of the contractors. It is safe to say that the latter will welcome relief from the responsibility of educational matters.

Assumption by the Ordnance Department of immediate and direct responsibility for providing adequate education within the Government reservations should lead to prompt action, which is imperative, and should insure uniformly adequate provisions, standards and expert control. . .

School buildings meeting all essential educational and hygienic requirements should be constructed as inexpensively as possible—designed for temporary use only, five or eight years at the longest. . .

Regulations and standards respecting school attendance within Government reservations should in no case be lower than those obtaining in the State in which the reservation is located. And, further, in no case should the lower age limit be above eight years, or the upper age limit of compulsory attendance be below fourteen years.

The length of the school year within Government reservations should in no case be less than that observed anywhere in the State in which the reservation is located, and in no case less than thirty-six weeks.

It may be found advantageous, at least in some reservations, to maintain a forty-eight week school year, divided into four terms of twelve weeks each, with a vacation of one week between terms.

Whatever the length of the school year, regulations should be enforced requiring the regular attendance of all resident children of compulsory school age throughout the entire school year, except that in the case of a forty-eight week year, compulsory attendance might be limited to three terms, or thirty-six weeks, attendance for the fourth term being optional.

The curriculum carried out in reservation schools should in no case be inferior to that of the best school systems of the state in which the reservation is located. Moreover, the direct support and control of all reservation schools by the Ordnance Department would practically demand an approximately uniform high curriculum standard throughout all reservation schools. . . .

The cost of maintaining reservation schools, in accordance with the above program, should be no more than the cost of maintaining high grade schools elsewhere. A fair estimate per pupil per year would be \$50 to \$60; this would cover all local expense of operating the plant, teachers' and principal's salaries, and necessary books and educational supplies. . . .